Excise duty on edible oil

*214. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that agriculturists and edible oil producing units are demanding withdrawal of excise duty imposed on edible oil/ vanaspati in view of the hardship being faced by them; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard and what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir. The edible oil and vanaspati industry has reqeusted for withdrawal of excise duty on refined edible oil and vanaspati.

(b) Representations have been received from trade and industry, *inter alia*, requesting for withdrawal of excise duty on refined edible oils and vanaspati. The rates of excise duty on edible oils and vanaspati are nominal at Re. 1 per kg and Rs. 1.25 per kg respectively. In addition, the manufacturers are also able to take Cenvat credit of all excise and countervailing duty paid on inputs and capital goods. In view of this, the request for exempting edible oil and vanaspati has not been accepted.

Development of tourism in Rajasthan

†*215. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the places in Rajasthan which have been identified by Government for the development of tourism during the current year; and

(b) the details of outlines drawn by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) Development of Tourism is undertaken primarily by the State Governments/UT Administrations. The Department of Tourism, Government of India however provides assistance for tourism projects identified in consultation with them. All State Governments/UT Administrations have been requested to send specific project proposals for consideration during 2004-05.

We are awaiting proposals from the State of Rajasthan.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.